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ANTIQUE ENGLISH INTERIORS

THE illustration on this page shows the famous fireplace and mantel in the spacious banqueting hall, from Rotherwas mansion, Hertfordshire. This is the most famous of the large rooms in the series of Elizabethan interiors at Rotherwas, and brought to America by Mr. C. J. Charles ("Charles of London"). The panelling is all in walnut, and it has a wonderful oak mantel of the purest Elizabethan type. In the decoration are soft colourings of red, blue, brown, green, black and gilding, there being "on the mantel tree of the chimney no less than twenty-five coats in one achievement," to quote from the seventeenth century historian, Blount, who eulogizes the dining room. The suggestion of Gothic character in the carvings of the banqueting hall seems to indicate that, unlike much of the carving executed in England at that time, this was not the work of Italians who had been brought over to England for the purpose, but of English artist

craftsmen. These did not hesitate to give their fancy full scope, but at the same time were governed by a feeling for dignity and sobriety in design and workmanship. The Gothic suggestion is chiefly visible in the figures of Justice, Temperance, Fortitude and Prudence, which form caryatides supporting the entablature of the overmantel. It should be understood that part of Rotherwas, the seat of the Bodenham family, about two and a half miles from Hereford, near the Welsh border, is an early sixteenth century structure. In 1731 a larger mansion was added on, and into this the early rooms were removed. These included not only the banqueting hall



Mantel from Rotherwas Banquet Hall

but other apartments in Elizabethan, Jacobean and Queen Anne panelling.

The Bodenham family lived at Rotherwas as early as the reign of Henry I and the mansion has descended from George Bodenham, of that day, in an unbroken line to Count Lubienski Bodenham, who died last year.